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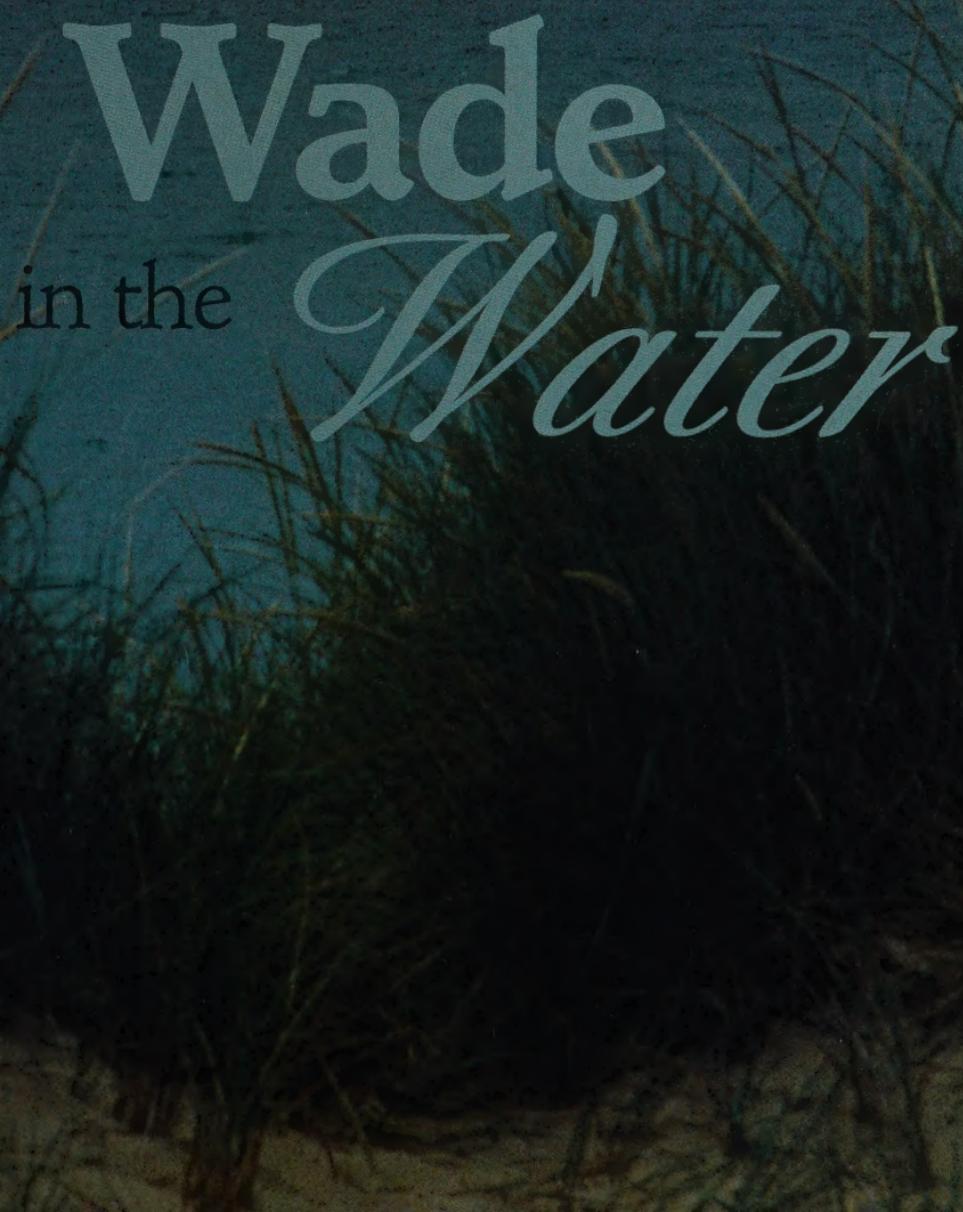
TULIBRARY

LUTHERAN
WOMAN
TODAY

FEBRUARY
1997

LEVEL
ONE

Wade
in the
Water



Blessings out of conflict

Thanks for the invitation [October LWT] to share my images of God through ordinary experiences, bringing awareness of the holiness of life everyday.

Thanks for LWT and the many articles to challenge my thinking. Thinking of Jesus as a rebel brings back many conflicts I've seen, heard, or been involved with in more than 70 years of life. Thanks for new ways to consider them, and to look for the blessings that came out of conflict.

*Ida Ashcroft
Flint, Michigan*

Thank you for printing Sister Joan Chittister's "Why I Stay" in the October LWT. It was truly a "pearl of great price"!

*Hazel Lehman
Edina, Minnesota*

A higher BLQ for us all!

I just want you to know how welcome "About the Bible" [by Dr. Terence Fretheim] will be as a common source of information for our circle. The topics suggested in the

September LWT on pp. 35-36 are terrific and certainly reflect the gaps too often felt by many of us in our Bible literacy quotient. To discuss our faith with greater understanding, and to witness with deeper conviction will be a real boon. Here's to a higher BLQ for us all! Thank you.

*Anna Ackley
Hershey, Pennsylvania*

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Looking for a Thankoffering devotion? If so, note that the LWT Thankoffering devotion, usually found in the February issue, will move to May—to give another seasonal opportunity for celebrating a Thankoffering. Those who wish to use a Thankoffering service before May will find a Thankoffering service in the *Women of the ELCA Stewardship Resources* workbook included in the Spring 1996 Resource Packet sent to each congregation last May. To order the workbook (code LT68-9137), call Augsburg Fortress at 800-328-4648.

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Shiphrah and Puah: Heroes of Exodus

Kathy J. Magnus

To paraphrase Exodus 1:8-21: A new king had arisen in Egypt. He was concerned that the Israelite people were growing more numerous and strong. He told his people that they must deal shrewdly with the Israelites or they would increase in number and in the event of war would join the enemy. He began all manner of cunning plans. The King of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, "When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birth-stool, if it is a boy, kill him, if it is a girl, let her live."

But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king commanded, but let the babies live. So the King of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this and allowed the boys to live?" The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Well, you see the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; they are so strong and vigorous they just give birth before we can even get there!" So God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and became very strong. And because the midwives feared God, God gave them families.

When I was in fourth grade my favorite book was *Miriam's Big Book of Bible Stories*. The book with its vividly colored pictures, beautiful costumes, and exciting stories from another time and place appealed to my sense of adventure and interest in faraway places. Every Saturday morning while my mom did laundry, I would sit on a stool in the laundry room and read those stories



aloud to her. I knew those stories by heart and they captivated me. The people seemed so real, their problems so ordinary, and the intervention of God so profound.

So I knew Jacob and Esau, Aaron and Moses. I knew by heart the story of Miriam, the princess, the baby, and the bulrushes. But I didn't know Shiphrah and Puah. How did editor "Miriam" miss them in her big book of Bible stories? Why did I never read their story of bravery? I surely would have remembered their names! I first heard of them in a sermon by a Presbyterian pastor. She wove their story into a sermon and it took me so by surprise that I almost interrupted her by gasping an audible, "Say what?"

I couldn't wait to share the story of these newfound women heroes with other women. I asked friends if they knew the story, but no one had ever heard of these wonderful women with the strange and wonderful names.

In 1993, at the Triennial Convention of Women of the ELCA in Washington D.C., I had opportunity to tell their story to the 5,000 women who gathered for worship in the massive convention hall. Since that summer, as I've traveled across this church, countless women have stopped me to chat about Shiphrah and Puah. They've shared stories of going home from Washington and reading for themselves the account in the first chapter of Exodus. Many whom I've talked with have agreed that Shiphrah and Puah are indeed heroes for today.

Shiprah and Puah were women called to take a stand. We, like Shiphrah and Puah, are called to be midwives in helping others create life in the midst of despair.

Shiphrah and Puah said a resounding "NO" to Pharaoh. Can we find the same kind of courage? Can Shiphrah and Puah be models for us in the last years of the 20th century? To what do you need to say "NO"? Abuse? Chemical dependency? Racism? Stress? Workaholism? Community violence? The absence of quiet, meditative spaces? Sexism? Poor self-image?

Shiphrah and Puah—two women with strange and wonderful names. Women who said a firm "NO" to despair and a clear, joyous "YES!" to the future. Women given to us by God as courageous models for today. Women who speak to us across the ages of the power of a simple, clear action in the midst of despair.

What Bible story books are the children in your life reading in the laundry room? Have they met Shiphrah and Puah? Would you be willing to introduce them? **AG**

Kathy J. Magnus is the vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. She and her husband, Richard, live in Denver, Colorado, and are parents of two young adults.



LUTHERAN WOMAN TODAY

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- Unless otherwise cited, all Bible references are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.
- Opinions expressed in the magazine are those of the writers and, except for the Women of the ELCA department and the Bible study, are not necessarily those of the Women of the ELCA.

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Waters of Life

David Engelstad
Catherine Malotky



Directions: These 40 days of Lenten meditations follow a consistent pattern. On the first day, read the Scripture passage suggested. Reflect on it throughout the day. Consider how the text speaks to your life. Ask questions. Let it sink in. The next day reflect on the meditation that the authors offer on the text. Use these meditations as part of your devotional life for the 40 days of Lent—starting on Ash Wednesday, February 12, and running through the Saturday of Holy Week (omitting the Sundays, which technically aren’t counted in the 40-day Lenten period). Or use them according to another pattern that best suits your life. Let this process be a blessing to you this season.—ED

Day 1: Read Genesis 1:1–2:1a

Day 2: Breathe on Me, O God

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:1-2).

Think of a time when you found yourself in waters dark and threatening and your life felt full of chaos and disorder. How might that time have been different if you had known you could breathe slowly and deeply, believing God’s Spirit was blowing gently upon the face of even these waters? If you are in such a time even now, breathe!

Day 3: Read Genesis 7:17–8:4

Day 4: Let the Wind Blow

“And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters [of the flood] subsided” (Genesis 8:1b).

Recall how you have yearned for the grace of this godly breeze, when you have been closed up in your ark for months,

weathering the storms that have been beating upon your place of refuge. What was it like to feel the breeze? Was your faith renewed?

Day 5: Read Genesis 21:9-21

Day 6: I Thirst

Hagar, cast off in the wilderness and out of water, decided that her child, Ishmael, was as good as dead, and she told God so. It is important, this story reminds, to tell God when you are dying of thirst.

The story continues, “*Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink*” (Genesis 21:19). It’s so like God to link together a declaration of thirst with a discovery of water. How has this worked in your life, that just when you reached the end of your rope, you found hope?

Day 7: Read Genesis 26:17-22

Day 8: Not Enough?

Isaac’s servants dug a well of spring water, “[but] the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac’s herdsmen, saying, ‘The water is ours’” (Genesis 26:20).

Believing that the amount of water in this well was not adequate to meet the needs of both families, the herdsmen were unwilling to share it. When have you thought and done the same, when has a sense of scarcity made you unwilling to freely share? What was at stake? What was gained? What was lost?

Day 9: Read Exodus 2:1-10

Day 10: Guard and Protect

Moses, the Bible tells us, at three months of age was put into a basket made of bulrushes daubed with bitumen and pitch, and was placed among the reeds at the river’s brink (see Exodus 2:3). From birth, life is precarious. As God did for Moses, God keeps constant watch over you, and wants you to be safe. God brings help to you, often from the most unlikely sources.

Day 11: Read Exodus 14:19-22

Day 12: Through the Waters

“*Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord drove the sea back...and the waters were divided*” (Exodus 14:21).

In this story, how much of Moses’ power, do you think, came from believing that God had already brought him safely through



the waters once before (as a baby)? In your baptism, God calls you to exercise this same power of faith.

Day 13: Read Exodus 15:20-25

Day 14: A Test of Faith

"Then Moses led onward from the Red Sea...they went three days in the wilderness and found no water" (Exodus 15:22b).

How frustratingly common it is to drink in the fullness of God's grace one day, only to know thirst the next! And when your baptismal faith is put to the test like this, recall Hagar's desperate words and God's refreshing response in Genesis 21:19 (see Day 6 devotion).

Day 15: Read Psalm 29



Day 16: Raging Storms

"The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders" (Psalm 29:3a).

The people of Israel heard God's voice in the thunderstorm, shaking the cedar trees and flashing forth like flames of fire. When you are caught in one of life's raging storms, listen for God, who is, do not doubt, at the same time raging against the forces of evil that threaten you.

Day 17: Read Song of Solomon 4:9-15 and 5:10-16

Day 18: A Love Song

She is like *"a garden fountain, a well of living water, and flowing"* (Song of Solomon 4:15). *"His eyes are like doves beside springs of water, bathed in milk, fitly set"* (5:12).

Water here is not so much used as an image of salvation or deliverance, but as an image of love (and a sensual one at that). More than any other book in the Bible, this one is not ashamed to declare that God's love for you is intimate, full of desire and delight. Does this seem inappropriate somehow? Or might imagining God's love this way help us to understand yet another facet of God's affection for us?

Day 19: Read Isaiah 35

Day 20: A Transforming Promise

"The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad...for waters shall break forth in the wilderness...the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water..." (Isaiah 35:1,6,7).

Everyone, from time to time, loses their ability to imagine how life, when it's dry and scorching, can become good again. When you

find yourself envious of someone else's good fortune, hear these words of promise that God speaks through Isaiah. It is the wilderness of your life that God promises to transform.

Day 21: Read Isaiah 43:1-7

Day 22: Call and Listen

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters I will be with you" (Isaiah 43:1b-2a).

As you pass through the waters of trial, listen for your name. Quietly, prayerfully, call on God's name over and over; and listen...until you can hear God, in reply, calling you by name.

Day 23: Read Jonah 1:1-17

Day 24: Under the Sea

"And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights" (Jonah 1:17).

How strange and frightening to be saved from drowning like this! Jonah spent three days in this watery grave before being raised to life again. After his resurrection experience—and only after—could Jonah do as God bid him do, to go to Ninevah. Cling to this promise the next time you feel swallowed up and fear you are drowning. In this are the mystery and power of our Lenten journey.

Day 25: Read Matthew 3:13-17

Day 26: God Is Pleased

When Jesus was baptized he heard a voice from heaven saying, *"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased"* (Matthew 3:17b).

When is the last time you heard God say, "I am well pleased with you"? Your baptism joins you to these words as surely as it joins you to the death and resurrection of Jesus. The power of sin is strong, but not strong enough to keep God from saying, "I am well pleased with you."

Day 27: Read Matthew 4:1-11

Day 28: Frailty and Power

"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil" (Matthew 4:1).

Give thanks today for the compassion and sensitivity of every person, including Jesus, who has wandered in the wilderness and learned about both their own frailty and the power of God.

Day 29: Read Matthew 14:28-33

Day 30: Jesus and Patience

When Peter, the disciple, sees Jesus walking on the water, he asks Jesus to help him do the same. Once on the water, Peter gets distracted by the wind and begins to sink. Then “*Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, ‘O man of little faith, why did you doubt?’*” (Matthew 14:31)

It does not seem to matter how often one hears about and experiences God’s help in times of thirst and storm. Everyone is still susceptible to that whispering voice that tells us that God is impatient with our fears and failings.

But Jesus is not impatient with Peter, or with you. He only desires that you might trust more and more the steadfastness of his love and his help.

Day 31: Read Mark 4:35-41

Day 32: A Great Calm

The disciples woke Jesus “*and said to him, ‘Teacher, do you not care if we perish?’ And he awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace! Be still!’ And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, ‘Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?’*” (Mark 4:38-40)

All the disciples wanted was to be rescued from the raging storm. Jesus, however, is concerned. In essence he asks them, “Will you ever truly enjoy the periods of life that are calm if you continue to be anxious with every storm?” During Lent, believe and look for Jesus to be as present in the storm as in the calm.



Day 33: Read Luke 8:4-8

Day 34: Waters of Life

Jesus tells a parable about a sower of seed. In talking about the seed that fell on the rock, Jesus says that “*as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture*” (Luke 8:6).

When your prayers are for life to be full of endless sunny days, stop and consider how God, through Baptism, graciously draws you back into the waters of life.

Day 35: Read John 4:7-29

Day 36: Living Water

She is often simply called, “The woman at the well.” Jesus asks her for a drink of water, and offers her “living water.” She responds, “*Sir, give me this water; that I may not thirst...*” (John 4:15).

When you find yourself aware of desires that cannot be satisfied,



fied by work or leisure, possessions or consumption, imagine meeting Jesus at the well. Listen as Jesus describes that which you are truly thirsting for—living water. Jesus will help you believe that it will be enough.

Day 37: Read John 19:28-37

Day 38: Sustaining Love

When he was on the cross, “Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said..., ‘I thirst.’” Later, “one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water” (John 19:28,34). God’s life-giving baptismal water does not keep suffering and death away. You are alive because God’s love sustains you. And one day you will die, knowing that, on this side of eternity, all is now finished with your life.

In thinking about Jesus’ death and your own, do not be too quick to race off toward what little can be known and described about your heavenly home. There is plenty of wonder and glory to see in God’s earthly presence, even though we cannot yet see it perfectly!

Day 39: Read Revelation 22:1-5

Day 40: Awareness and Trust

“Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Revelation 22:1). On the other side of the resurrection, will all the waters you pass through be still and calm? Or will it be that we will finally be able to see that each of the waters you pass through have also become the waters of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb?

Often the season of Lent, with its persistent call to enter with faith into the dark and troubled waters, never seems to have an end. John’s vision in Revelation is a reminder that it is your Easter faith that gives you the hope to live your Lenten life. You may wish that your faith was free from all worry and doubt. Yet God is content this Lent to draw you toward just a little more awareness and trust. As often as you begin to sink beneath the waves into the watery deep, God immediately reaches out a hand to catch you, and you are brought through to the other side. **G**

The Rev. Catherine Malotky is an Augsburg Fortress development editor; the Rev. David Engelstad, her spouse, is a chaplain at Luther Hall. They have two daughters: Cara, a sixth-grader; and Abbie, a third-grader.

Note: All texts are from the Revised Standard Version. These devotions follow the pattern and spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola.

Wade in the Water

Lorraine S. Brugh

What does it mean to sing someone else's song?

World music is everywhere. Music stores now have entire sections devoted to world music and world beat. *With One Voice*, the recently published Lutheran hymnal supplement, contains hymns and service music from every continent. Most of us have heard music from a distant part of the globe in the past month. Just how do we hear music from a culture that is not our own?

Churches today are adding hymns to their worship that were virtually unknown just a decade ago. The South African hymn “*Siyahamba*” (“We Are Marching in the Light of God”) and

the Brazilian hymn “*Cantad al Señor*” (“Oh, Sing to the Lord”) are just two examples of widely sung hymns in North American churches. What happens when we wade into the waters of another culture? What does it mean to sing someone else's song?

It is a simple but profound step to recognize that one is standing on foreign ground when singing someone else's song. While it's impossible to know exactly what any piece of music meant to those who wrote it, it is important to recognize that in crossing cultures there may be many layers of differences in understanding.

For instance, there may be cultural differences in the way a song is performed. This may include the kinds of accompanying instruments, solo singers, or involvement of the community. In much African choral music, for example, there is an interdependent and overlapping relationship between the solo cantor and the congregation's response. This musical form, known as call and response, is quite different from

the classical Western European understanding of a solo vocalist.

There may be differences in the purpose of the music itself. A hymn of resistance from a Latin American base community may be a song of solidarity and commitment for those engaged in a daily struggle for liberation. In another community, the song will mean something very different.

Recognizing the differences that emerge when music crosses cultures may make music of another culture appear inaccessible. But this shouldn't keep a community from wading into unfamiliar waters. By trying new forms, we may find a new voice for our faith.

Some of the differences give opportunities for learning. If a new hymn comes out of an oral culture, it can be an opportunity for a congregation to learn the hymn in a new way. For a song leader to teach a hymn to a congregation without any music would better represent the learning style from the original culture. This simple approach might speak volumes to those encountering a new musical form, and it might challenge the assumption that music is always learned from print. This is one small way in which music is recognized to be crossing cultures.

An example of a piece of music involving multiple layers of difference in crossing cultures is "Wade in the Water." This spiritual has roots in the African-American slave community before the Civil War. The biblical references in the spiritual come from two places. In the refrain, the "troubling of the water" is from John 5, where a man who's been paralyzed for 38 years waits by a pool of water. When the waters are "troubled," or stirred up, those who enter the water will be healed.

The other biblical reference is from Exodus. The story of the Hebrews' escape through the Red Sea fills the song's verses. It seems the two Bible stories get mixed together, as the stanzas end with the reference to John: "God's gonna trouble the waters." At first, this seems confusing. These two biblical stories become intertwined, one from the Old Testament and one from the New.

Understanding the context in which this spiritual was sung helps to explain the blending of Scripture stories. In the religious practice of the slaves, a central form of religious expression was a ritual called the ring shout. The ring was

**Spirituals are
places where a
community
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and longings.**

a circle of worshipers moving counter-clockwise. The shout refers to the singing, which grew in intensity and emotion as the worshipers moved. In this religious ceremony the people's physical, emotional, and spiritual needs were met.

The ring shout included multiple forms of artistic expression. Singing was the most important. The way the spiritual was integrated with other art forms is critical to understanding its place in the slaves' faith. In its expression with dance and drama, the spiritual grew and flourished.

This combination of art, drama, and music fused the biblical story with the life experience of the slave. Through this fusion, people experienced the great truth that God writes the story of humanity through the lines of time. As the slaves danced and sang the spirituals, time was suspended. The story of Moses and the Red Sea was equally as present as the troubling of the waters in the pool of Bethesda, as was the daily experience of the slaves. The characters of the Bible became powerfully present in the communal experience of the ring shout.

Howard Thurman, an African-American theologian, writes about the meaning of African-American spirituals in his book *Deep River and The Negro Spiritual Speaks of Life and Death*. For Thurman, the spirituals are places where a community expresses its deepest hopes and longings. Thurman sees a perseverance in the spirituals that defied the slave community's daily experience of hopelessness. Writing about the spiritual "Wade in the Water," Thurman says, "This is the great disclosure: that there is at the heart of life a Heart...This is the message of the spiritual. Do not shrink from moving confidently out into choppy seas. Wade in the water, because God is troubling the water."*

Thurman's advice could apply to us who cross cultures as we learn new, and old, hymns of the faith. We needn't stand on the shore, dismayed over the depth of the waters. We shouldn't just stick a toe in and run back to the warmth of the beach. We can wade into new and foreign waters, having confidence that God is with us. "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you.... Do not fear, for I am with you" (Isaiah 43:2,5a). "God's gonna trouble the waters." **GC**



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*From Thurman, Howard. *Deep River and The Negro Spiritual Speaks of Life and Death*, Richmond, Indiana, Friends United Press, 1975.

Today's Shiprahahs and Puahs

Stephen M. Larson

In most adult Christian education classes, if you ask about Shiprahah or Puah, you're met with awkward silence. The two are usually unknown. Yet Shiprahah and Puah cry out to be remembered as women of deep faith and profound courage.

To remember Puah and Shiprahah from the story of the Exodus is to be aware of their sisters who are our contemporaries. For in them, Puah and Shiprahah dwell among us today. To see them we need eyes of faith, to hear their cry we need ears of faith, to kneel with them we need to take on their faith and courage.

To encounter today's Puahs and Shiprahahs we need first to remember. Imagine Puah and Shiprahah in Egypt 40 years before the Exodus. In a time of harsh oppression, they are two named midwives among many other unnamed midwives. I imagine them as middle-aged, well-experienced women. In my mind's eye, they show their teeth by smiling with peaceful satisfaction, or sometimes by clenching them in their own travail alongside a woman in labor. They are women of faith, shaped by prayer and tradition, confident, creative, bold. They are women of life. Though acquainted with grief and death, they labor to bring forth the joy of new birth. Confident on their knees before a birth or in prayer before their God, Shiprahah and Puah know how to stand up to other authority.

So posture is a clue to today's Puahs and Shiprahahs. Postured in prayer, they are poised to catch life despite the pain and anguish of labor. Upon their knees, bloodied, with arms outstretched, with hands

(continued on p. 15)

I Cry Out for Liberty (*Yo Te Nombro, Libertad*)*

By the bird that is imprisoned, by the fish that has been netted,
by the friend who is held captive for the words he spoke with courage;
by the flowers that lie uprooted, by the grass that has been trampled,
by the tree that's been distorted, by the pain of tortured bodies;

Chorus: I cry out for liberty. For everyone in our country now I call you by your true name, I call to you in the darkness when there's no one to see; High up on the town walls I write your name clear for all to see, name you by your true name that's universal in every land; and then I whisper new names that stir within my bosom, which for fear I cannot name.

By the teeth that we are clenching, by the rage we are suppressing,
by the knot that's in our gullet, by the lips no more for singing;
by the kiss that stays in secret, by the poem that is censored,
by the youth that has been exiled, by the names that are forbidden;

Chorus

By opinions persecuted, by the heavy blows inflicted,
by the martyrs of resistance, and by those who are in hiding,
by the fear that you awaken, by your progress that they spy on,
by the way that they attack you, by the children who can kill you;

Chorus

By all those we vainly search for, by the guilty who keep silent,
by the answer that's denied us, by the love of life and laughter,
by the rose that now lies withered, by the child brought up in sorrow,
by the fight that has no ending, by the friends and family missing;

Chorus

*Words and music: unknown, Chile. English paraphrase ©1996 Alan Luff. Used with permission.

open, they are witnesses to pain, advocates of life. Do you know them?

See Shiphrah in Calcutta. Called by God, inspired by Mother Teresa, upheld by a community of sisters, she bends her knee to shelter life. Praying, she labors to cradle the worn, wrinkled woman abandoned to the street. Up from her knees, she stands. Defiant of conventional authority, she makes way to a refuge, a hospice where the woman is bathed, fed, clothed, prayed over, embraced unto death.

See Puah crouched, at dusk, beside a sobbing teenager tormented by an unwanted pregnancy. Eyes closed, lips sealed, Puah listens intently as the story pours forth. At last, out of her attentive silence, she kneels with arms outstretched in welcome embrace. Her care is punctuated by question marks: "Do you know that you are not alone? May I journey with you? Do you know that a future is possible?" Together they limp toward a new dawn.

Do you see them? Do you recognize Puah and Shiphrah in England at the women's demonstrations to keep nuclear weapons off British soil? Do you catch a glimpse of them among the women who are quilting in Geneva, Switzerland, to contribute toward the abolition of land mines in Angola, Cambodia, and Afghanistan? Maybe you smiled when you saw them in the grandmother in your own congregation who took her coffee cup over to the newly divorced father of three who dared come to church.

We met Shiphrah and Puah in our congregation last Holy Week through music. On Good Friday, our choir sang a song from Chile. We had learned it from

Journeys Through Song

The text and music of "I Cry Out for Liberty" ("Yo Te Nombro, Libertad") is found in *Journeys Through Song*, 60 songs from Brazil, Chile, the Philippines, and South Africa collected, transcribed, and edited by Maggie Hamilton. *Journeys Through Song* is available for 13 British pounds from Counterpoint, Christian Aid Office, Carrs Lane Church Center, Birmingham B4 7SX, United Kingdom.

Maggie Hamilton—a woman who travels the world as a midwife to music. Maggie seeks out, listens, transcribes, and thus gives birth to songs of protest and praise such as “I Cry Out for Liberty.”

“I Cry Out for Liberty” was once sung literally on the run. In the 1970s in Chile, a modern-day Pharaoh—the dictator General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte—came to power. He ruled with terror and gave orders for people to be exiled, tortured, or killed. Poets and musicians were censored and arrested. No one and no place was safe.

Yet groups of women would gather to protest, to speak out a courageous word of hope and life. One way they did this was through the song “I Cry Out for Liberty.” Using pre-arranged signals, women gathered in public places to stand and sing against the oppressive authorities.

T

hese women knew the terror and violence of families torn apart. Husbands, sons, sisters, brothers, and fathers were among the martyrs of resistance who had “disappeared.” Witnesses to pain, bloodied, with arms outstretched, these advocates of life sang with open hands. Then they scattered, quickly dispersing before the police arrived. At another time, another place, they would reassemble to sing again, as the midwives of liberty—like Shiphrah and Puah awaiting the mighty acts of God’s liberation in the Exodus.

We sang with them—the contemporary Shiphrahs and Puahs of Chile—on Good Friday within a simple liturgy remembering Jesus’ passion. With eyes of faith to see and ears of faith to hear, we may meet Puah and Shiphrah today, not only in the world but in our own congregations. Dare we kneel with them, ready to catch new life? **GA**

The Rev. Stephen M. Larson serves the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Geneva’s English-speaking congregation in Switzerland. He and his wife, the Rev. Rebecca Larson, have two daughters, Katie (19) and Sarah (15).

What's "Lutheran" in Music?

Scott C. Weidler

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he organ rumbled out an improvisation of the hymn. The sounds of rhythmic, unison singing filled the old stone church. This was clearly a gathering of early Lutherans (although they weren't called that yet) because the text they sang boldly proclaimed the message of the Reformation:

*Salvation unto us has come
By God's free grace and favor;
Good works cannot avert our doom,
They help and save us never.
Faith looks to Jesus Christ alone,
Who did for all the world atone;
He is our mediator.* (Lutheran Book of Worship 297)

Early in the Reformation

By the dawn of the 17th century, the words and sounds became sweeter, more intimate. They still spoke of God's love for all God's people.

*Lord, when you look on us in love,
At once there falls from God above
A ray of purest pleasure.
Your Word and Spirit, flesh and blood
Refresh our souls with heav'nly food.
You are our dearest treasure!
Let your mercy
Warm and cheer us!
Oh, draw near us!
For you teach us
God's own love through you has reached us.* (LBW 76)

Mid-17th century Germany was engulfed in war, one that lasted nearly 30 years. The land and spirits of the people were devastated. Their hymns provided strength, comfort, and reassurance of God's ever-present love.

*What language shall I borrow
To thank thee, dearest friend,
For this thy dying sorrow,
Thy pity without end?
Oh, make me thine forever,
And, should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
Outlive my love to thee.* (LBW 116/117)

Lutheran hymns from the far northern countries drew largely on the imagery of their long, dark winter days and a yearning for the return of spring. Images of Jesus' return and visions of heaven abound.

*What blessed joy overflows my spirit,
Because your wondrous grace to me was giv'n!
Complete your work, that I may inherit
Eternal life at last with you in heav'n!* (LBW 326)

The Reformation Continues

From his prison cell in Nazi Germany, Lutheran pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote and sang his faith.

*By gracious powers so wonderfully sheltered,
and confidently waiting come what may,
we know that God is with us
night and morning,
and never fails to greet us each
new day.* (With One Voice 736)

Assembled in Boe Chapel in 1964, the St. Olaf College community sang words penned by Herbert Brokering, on the occasion of the college's 90th anniversary:

*Classrooms and labs!
Loud boiling test tubes!
Sing to the Lord a new song!
Athlete and band!
Loud cheering people!
Sing to the Lord a new song!* (LBW 558)

Drums and dancing accompanied the singing of a Tanzanian Lutheran congregation.

*Listen, listen, God is calling
through the Word inviting,
offering forgiveness, comfort and joy.
Jesus gave his mandate: share the good news
that he came to save us and set us free.* (WOV 712)

The Heart of Lutheran Music

At the heart of all Lutheran music is the song of the people. Music that is truly Lutheran focuses on God's activity in, among, and through the worshiping assembly gathered around Word and Sacrament. A primary hallmark of Luther's Reformation was the restoration of the people's song proclaimed in their own language. Even most Lutheran choral and instrumental music is based on congregational melodies and texts.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in *Life Together*, writes, "It is not you that sings, it is the Church that is singing, and you, as a member of it, may share in its song." When Lutherans assemble for worship, they sing not as individuals but as the church. The individual faith experience is important, but at its best, Lutheran singing is community song. The song of the church provides a balance with the song of the culture. In this day and age, an emphasis on *we* helps to balance society's emphasis on *me*.

Breaking open pieces of the contemporary culture and transforming them into vehicles through which God's grace is shown and known is truly a Lutheran approach to music-making. This is similar to what the early Lutheran composers did with German folk melodies. The task is similar today. More and more Lutheran composers need to accept the challenge of transforming elements of jazz, blues, rap, and other musical styles from within our culture for use in the church.

Lutheran music clearly proclaims the message of salvation by grace through faith. The focus is always on God's saving activity. While these specific words are not included in every song, that grace/faith message weaves its way through all that we sing. Lutheran music always seeks a balance:

- between Law and Gospel, never losing sight of Luther's emphasis on the theology of the cross, even in a contemporary culture that doesn't want to hear it.
- between the new and the old, allowing music to express the timeless nature of the communion of saints.
- between "we" and "me."
- between simple texts and melodies and the challenging ones. The simple are faith forming; the more complex express the strength of our faith.

Lutheran music invites those who seek the message of God's love to witness the depth of our faith, and it provides opportunities for faith to be sown in them. **GC**

Scott C. Weidler is associate director of Worship and Music in the Division for Congregational Ministries at the ELCA.

Why Are Bible Translations So Different? Part 2

Terence E. Fretheim

English translations began to appear in England in the 14th century. The King James Version (KJV), published in 1611 and sponsored by King James I of England, soon became the authorized version for English-speaking Protestants and remained so for more than 300 years. The Douay-Rheims Version (1610) had a comparable status for Roman Catholics.

Today, however, the situation is quite different. More than 50 English translations of the New Testament have appeared since 1950! Why so many? Some reasons are good, for example, to update the language. Other reasons are less admirable, such as competition among publishing houses to reap the profits of Bible sales.

The most common recent English translations include the following:

1. The Revised Standard Version (RSV, 1952). This revision of the King James Version by American scholars was sponsored by the National Council of Churches of Christ. The **New Revised Standard Version** (NRSV, 1989) is a major revision of the RSV.

2. The New English Bible (NEB, 1970) was translated by British scholars for British readers. It was revised in 1989 and is known as

the **Revised English Bible** (REB).

3. The New International Version (NIV, 1978) was initiated by evangelical churches and sponsored by the New York International Bible Society.

4. The Today's English Version (TEV, 1976; also known as the **Good News Bible**) was sponsored by the American Bible Society.

5. The Jerusalem Bible (JB, 1966) was developed under Roman Catholic auspices in Jerusalem, and it was revised in 1985 as the **New Jerusalem Bible** (NJB).

6. The New American Bible (NAB, 1970), developed by American Roman Catholic scholars, is authorized for Catholic readers.

7. The New Jewish Publication Society Bible (NJPS), completed in 1982, is sponsored by the Jewish Publication Society of America.

8. The Living Bible Paraphrased (LBP) was completed in 1971 by Kenneth N. Taylor.

Translators are concerned about two basic matters: accuracy and clarity. They seek to be faithful to the text while writing in clear and contemporary English. Beyond these common goals, many factors come into play, giving rise to many differences.

This month we consider three

questions to ask of any translation. Read the preface to your Bible to get answers to these and other questions.

What kind of translation principles have been followed?

Translating is not an exact science. No translation of the original Greek and Hebrew can be completely literal and still make sense to contemporary readers. The result is that every translation is an interpretation. That is, the point of view of the translators will shape the translation, often unintentionally.

Some translations, such as the NRSV and the NIV, have a more literal, word-for-word translation. The basic principle of the NRSV is "As literal as possible, as free as necessary." Other translations, such as the Today's English Version, have a meaning-for-meaning translation. Still others, like the Living Bible, are paraphrases. The paraphrases are less literal, freer attempts to help the average reader immediately understand every word. Naturally, the less literal the translation is, the more likely the translation will reflect the perspective of the translators.

Look at these texts from Hosea as translated in the NRSV and TEV:

♦ (4:19) "A wind has wrapped them in its wings," (NRSV). "They will be carried away as by the wind" (TEV).

♦ (12:1) "Ephraim herds the wind, and pursues the east wind all day long" (NRSV). "Everything that the people of Israel do from morning to night is useless and destructive" (TEV).

Chances are you find the TEV easier to understand than the more literal NRSV. But what you gain in quickness, you lose in depth. The image of the wind in the NRSV, for example, makes you stop and ponder

what is meant. It is likely that, once you've thought about the wind for awhile, more than one possible meaning will occur to you and the image (and the text!) will stick with you longer.

2. Is the translation the work of an individual or a committee?

Most translations are the work of committees, but occasionally this is not the case. For example, the Living Bible is the work of one person, and his personal point of view (for example, he is a Baptist) is more evident. This can be seen in 1 Peter 3:21: "*Baptism...now saves you*" (in NRSV) compared to "*In baptism we show that we have been saved*" (in LBP). Committee translations are less affected by individual preferences.

3. Who are the sponsors and what is the makeup of the translation committee? Remember that translators have different points of view. The NRSV committee, for example, was made up of both female and male scholars who came from all major Protestant denominations (and which included Roman Catholic and Jewish representatives). The presence of women no doubt made a difference in some of its translations (see next month's column). The NIV committee, for instance, was influenced by the perspectives of evangelical churches. One difference the latter makes may be seen in Psalm 2 where "Anointed One," "King," and "Son" are capitalized so as to make the connection with Jesus more evident.

Next month we will look at other ways that make for differences among translations. G

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Wisdom, Courage, Compassion

Donna Hacker Smith

Read: Exodus 1:15-2:10, the study text for session 2 of the Bible study (see p. 23). Focus on Exodus 2:10b.

Sing or read: “For All the Faithful Women” (With One Voice 692).

Responsive Reading

Leader: In this session we learn of the women who, by preserving the life of Moses, prepared the way for the exodus from Egypt. Like so many ordinary people behind the great events of history, the women seemed unimportant to those around them. Not all of their names are familiar or remembered. And yet they have a critical significance in the history of our faith.

Once again we see God’s will accomplished even in a situation of danger, oppression, and risk to the faithful. The One who created us sees into the hearts of people, calls them by name, and empowers them to make God’s plans a reality.

Group: “She named him Moses, ‘because,’ she said, ‘I drew him out of the water.’”

Leader: Today we remember those whose actions led to God’s purpose being accomplished; we remember those who saved the life of Moses:

Group: His mother and sister, the faithful midwives, the daughter of the Pharaoh—all did God’s will.

Leader: Celebrating those who drew Moses from the water, we remember those who saw us through the waters of Baptism:

Group: We thank you, Lord, for our parents, our pastors, and our teachers, those who have led us to the gift of salvation. For our partners in this study, for our companions on the pilgrimage of faith, we give you thanks.

Leader: Today we turn to God again, praying for the wisdom of Moses’ mother and sister, and for the courage of the midwives, the compassion of Pharaoh’s daughter.

Group: Renew us in our baptismal gift of your Holy Spirit, that we may be bold to do your will.

Leader: In the actions and words of an Egyptian princess, we gladly praise the One who called us by name and drew us from the waters of Baptism into eternal life:

All: “She named him Moses, ‘because,’ she said, ‘I have drawn him out of the water.’”

For Further Reflection

Reminded in this session of the power of Baptism, ask yourself, “Where might the Spirit’s power be calling me to act, to speak, or to care today?” ⁶

The Rev. Donna Hacker Smith serves at St. James Lutheran in Forrester, Illinois.



From Slavery to Service A Study of Exodus

Diane L. Jacobson

Bible Study, Session 2

Preparing the Way: The Women Who Save Moses
Study Text: Exodus 1:15—2:10

Memory Verse

She named him Moses “because,” she said, “I drew him out of the water” (Exodus 2:10b).

Overview

Session 2 introduces us to a company of women who help to rescue the rescuer—the two midwives, Moses’ mother and sister, and Pharaoh’s daughter. We’ll consider who is named in the text, who speaks, and what actions they take. Through these details, the women are revealed to be courageous, faithful, inventive, compassionate, and significant in holy history. Through them, we will also consider our own roles and gifts.

Opening

O God of grace, you have called each of us by name. Grant us the courage of the women of Exodus that we might live always by compassion and the strength to do your will. Be with our children, our leaders, and with each of us as we seek to find our own places in your world. This we ask in Christ’s name. Amen.

Hymn

“God of Grace and God of Glory” (LBW 415, stanzas 1-2, 4)

The Cruelty of Pharaoh

Read Exodus 1:15-22. This passage, like the one before it, focuses on the brutality of the king of Egypt. Slavery was not enough; the goal had become total destruction rooted in the mass murder of infants. This story often reminds Christians of Matthew 2, which tells of Herod's murder of the infant boys in Bethlehem. In both cases evil seems to have the upper hand. But, just as in Matthew, God was about to raise up a leader who would help carry out God's plan to save the people.

Women Who Prepare the Way

How does God divert the cruelty of Pharaoh and bring about the birth of this leader? God acted through women who set the stage and prepared the way. In fact, many of the stories about important men in Scripture begin with a story of the woman or women who make their lives or actions possible.

1. See if you can identify the following women:

- ◆ Two sisters who struggled with each other over the birth of Jacob's children (Genesis 29-30).
- ◆ The woman who prayed for the birth of Samuel (1 Samuel 1-2).
- ◆ The Moabite woman who, through loyalty to her new family, gave birth to David's grandfather (the book of Ruth).
- ◆ The barren woman who was filled with the Holy Spirit when her son John leapt in her womb (Luke 1).
- ◆ The woman who responded, "Let it be with me according to your word" so that Jesus might be born (Luke 1).

The Faith of the Midwives

In biblical stories, the people who are named in the text are often the people who are shown to have power. Power is sometimes a subtle matter. Often the Bible shows that the really valuable power lies precisely with those who seem to be weakest (see 2 Corinthians 12:9, "for power is made perfect in weakness").

2. Look again at Exodus 1:15-22 and notice

which characters are given names. Are you surprised that Pharaoh, the mighty king of Egypt, remains nameless? Is he really as powerful as he thinks?

When you read a narrative passage in the Bible, you might find it helpful to notice not only who is named, but also who speaks and acts. Often those with name, voice, and action are being intentionally highlighted as the most powerful and important.

3. Who speaks in Exodus 1:15—2:10 and what do they do?

Fill in the following chart:

Subject	Times Spoken	Action
Pharaoh		
Shiphrah and Puah		
God		

4. Pharaoh called upon Shiphrah and Puah to do his bidding, but they “feared God” and disobeyed the Pharaoh. What does fearing God mean to you? To others you know?

In addition to fearing God, the midwives and other women in this text are associated with life: Girls are allowed to *live* (verses 16, 22); the midwives allow the boys to *live* (verse 17, 18); Hebrew women are *lively* in giving birth (in Exodus 1:19, the Hebrew word translated “vigorous” in the New Revised Standard Version is “lively”). Pharaoh deals only in death, but the women deal with life.

From each of these details we begin to see that the midwives who “fear God” and give life have more power (also more faith) than the mighty Pharaoh, who can only issue commands and ask questions.

Interestingly, we cannot be certain about the nationalities of the midwives. Shiphrah and Puah might be either Hebrew women (as the translation in the New Revised Standard

Version assumes) or Egyptian women who are midwives to the Hebrews (an equally possible translation). In the first case, Pharaoh ordered Hebrew women to kill their own children and assumed they would obey because they were slaves. In the second case, he assumed the women would obey him because they would be loyal Egyptians.

If Shiphrah and Puah are Hebrew women, then women are the first Israelites in Exodus to respond to God. If they are Egyptian, then foreigners are the first people in Exodus to trust in God, an even more startling possibility! Notice that in either case, *women* are the first people in Exodus to follow God, rather than Pharaoh, and they are named, which makes them more important than the unnamed Pharaoh who enslaves Israel.

God and Pharaoh

Exodus 1:17 marks the first time God is mentioned in Exodus. It is in their reaction to God (verse 17) and in God's reaction to them (verses 20-21) that we know how significant the midwives are to God's plan.

5. **Read again Exodus 1:20-21.** What do you learn about God in these verses?

Pharaoh thought that when he issued commands, he was in control. But God often gives power and control in mysterious ways.

God recognized an important power in the two women. They helped to bring forth life in the midst of death. Pharaoh, however, saw danger only in the Hebrew men. Because he could only recognize their kind of power, he ordered only the sons to be killed. Pharaoh envisioned no threat from women. He thought he was safe when he added to his command that girl babies should live; he did not expect women to cause trouble. Little did he know!

While the women in the passage were associated with life, Pharaoh dealt only in death. In commanding the death of the baby boys, Pharaoh thought he was commanding the death of only his enemies, but in his final speech of this passage, and indeed his final speech in the whole text, Pharaoh committed a stunning slip of the tongue. Read on.

Many Bibles include a footnote for verse 22 that explains

that in the original Hebrew, the phrase "of the Hebrews" is missing. When read without this phrase, the sentence reveals that Pharaoh, in his ignorance, ordered *all* boys cast into the Nile. With this slip, Pharaoh ironically commanded that all sons should be drowned and die. This unintended command will be carried out when his own son and the whole Egyptian army drown in the waters of the Red Sea.

Women, Water, and Deliverance

Read Exodus 2:1-10. We will notice as we read through Exodus that women in the Bible are often associated with water. (In the next session we will look at a number of stories about women at wells.) Moreover, water often symbolizes two opposing realities. Water can be a symbol of chaos, the place of drowning, or it can be a symbol of life, the place of salvation and deliverance.

In the beginning of Genesis, as in Baptism, water is transformed to give life out of chaos. Exodus follows this same pattern. Pharaoh proclaimed that all the Hebrew boys should die by being cast into the Nile, but instead the Nile became the path of deliverance.

The Baby in the Basket

Chapter 2 begins with marriage and birth, a continuation of God's life-giving nature. A woman conceives and bears a fine son whom she can hide from Pharaoh's edict for only three months.

6. **Look closely at Exodus 2:3-4.** List the many careful steps the mother takes to protect her child. It is interesting that verse 3 is so detailed, especially when compared to the rest of the passage.

The word *basket* in the New Revised Standard Version is better translated *ark*, as it is in the King James Version. The Hebrew word for ark, *tebath*, occurs in Scripture only here and in the story of Noah. This points us to some similarities between the two stories. Both Noah and the child faced death by drowning. God wished to rescue both for the sake of his promise to Israel and to all people. Moses' mother, like Noah, built an ark, a vessel of salvation. Like Noah, she took great care to ensure that

the ark would remain waterproof.

Her labor with bitumen and pitch is also reminiscent of the labor of the Israelites with mortar and brick in Exodus 1:14. Both entail hard work, but one is the work of slavery while the other is the work of liberation.

Think once more of Pharaoh's command to cast every Hebrew boy into the Nile. In mock obedience to Pharaoh's command, this Hebrew mother used an ark to *place*, rather than *cast*, her child into the Nile.

Pharaoh's Daughter

When Pharaoh's daughter comes down to the river, the tension in the story mounts. In her person this daughter of Pharaoh embodies the two characters who were pitted against each other—on the one hand, Pharaoh, and on the other hand, women. Will this new woman act like the other “daughters” in the text (Shiphrah, Puah, the mother, and the sister)? That is, will she act like the other women in the story and come to the help of a defenseless child? Or will she align herself with Pharaoh, her father, and command that the child be killed?

7. **Read Exodus 2:5-6 once more.** These verses contain 11 action words. List them.

In Exodus 2:6, the tension builds until Pharaoh's daughter's eyes are opened, and compassion and pity prevail. When Pharaoh's daughter responds to the child's cry, she aligns herself with the other women, rather than with her father. Her speech reveals that she understands the situation perfectly—that this child is one of the Hebrew children whose murder her own father has commanded. With the greatest irony, one more woman delivers a child from the danger of the waters.

Sister, Mother, and Daughter

Exodus 2:7-9 shows us how much fun Scripture can be, even in the midst of the most serious situation. The child's sister, like us, has been tensely waiting for Pharaoh's daughter to make a decision and reveal her true character. The sister now reveals herself and speaks to this new woman. Without introduction, she offers the services of a Hebrew woman to nurse the child. The sister's lack of fear or formality suggests a

silent understanding. Both she and the Pharaoh's daughter know what lies beneath the request. The sister gets her mother and brings her to the Pharaoh's daughter who, in turn, gives the boy back to his own mother to nurse. Pharaoh's daughter even gives the mother wages, a far cry from the intended death. Irony abounds in this tight circle of women!

The Name

The motherhood of this baby was now to be shared. In Exodus 2:10, in the final irony of the text, Pharaoh's daughter formally adopts the child. In the end, after giving the child new life through "baptism" in the Nile, she also gives him a name.

Did you notice that no one else in this passage is named? In the absence of other names, this final name takes on great significance and shows us that this child is special. Pharaoh's daughter names the child Moses. In the Egyptian language Moses means "son," but in the Bible the meanings of names are most often established by a play on words. She named him Moses (*mosheh*) "because," she said, "I drew him out (*mashah*) of the water."

Moses' name is particularly appropriate because this one who is *drawn out* of the water will one day himself *draw out* the people of Israel from the waters of the Red Sea.

Conclusions and Possibilities

Before we close this month's study, look back at two features of Exodus 1:15—2:10 and think about possible implications for us.

8. Spend some time thinking about connections between baptismal images and these two stories. Take some time to draw out the various connections. Think about what it means to be a baptized child of God.

9. Think about the five women who made possible the life and work of Moses. What made them special? How was God active in their lives? What were their gifts to the world? How are you like them? Fill in the following chart and make sure you add your own name to the list of women:

Woman	Her (my) role	Her (my) gift
Shiphrah and Puah		
mother		
sister		
Pharaoh's daughter		
(my name)		

Looking Ahead

In the next session, we will look at two brief stories that continue to embellish the portrait of this enslaved people and introduce the leader who becomes the focus of the text. Moses' portrayal, Moses' journey, and Moses' search become focal points as we think about the nature of leaders and the search for identity. **GCA**

About the Author

Diane L. Jacobson is associate professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary (St. Paul, Minnesota), where she has been teaching since 1982 and serving as chair of the biblical division since 1993. Diane is married to Paul, a professional musician, and they have two sons, Nathaniel (24) and Benjamin (20). Her simple pleasures include gathering with friends, traveling, walking their dog, Petra, reading mysteries, and teaching Scripture.

"From Slavery to Service: A Study of Exodus" is prepared by Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and edited by Catherine Malotky. Questions and/or comments about the Bible study should be sent to Marlene Joseph, director for educational resources, Women of the ELCA, 8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631-4189.

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Pharaoh's Daughter

Glenndy Sculley

“

They told me that even as a tiny baby, he was beautiful. His parents certainly loved, protected, and cared for him. I loved him, too, my big brother, the future Pharaoh of all Egypt.

He was never really my playmate. I was a girl, after all, and would never rule the kingdom. But I admired him, envied him even, following in our father's path.

Another boy child came into my life—Moses. The mystery of where this Hebrew child came from was only partly solved by the fierce little girl standing guard over his basket. “I know someone who can nurse him for you. He's still awfully young, isn't he?” She asked so intently that I knew she somehow must be related to him. But I didn't care about any of this. All I saw was a baby who needed help, and I knew I could give it.

As I drew him out of the water, it seemed right to name him Moses. Part of me was glad the slaves were rebelling against my father and finding a way to let their boy children live. Seeing how my father loved my brother, I couldn't understand how he could make such a decree. In a way, I was secretly proud to be defying his order.

Perhaps my father's decree about the Hebrew sons was the beginning of the end. I don't know. I

can certainly understand how it would have angered their god. But I don't think any of us expected *their* god to be stronger than *our* god. I didn't expect that the child raised by the Pharaoh's daughter would be the downfall of the Pharaoh!

It was so hard for me to watch the Pharaoh and my adopted—and exiled—son locked in a battle over the slaves. The Pharaoh claimed they were *his* slaves. Moses said they were *God's* people. I didn't believe that these slaves were the people chosen by a powerful God.

And what a price we paid for that doubt. The longest night of my life—I remember it vividly!—all the death, all the grief, while my beloved Moses led his people out of our land and into the desert.

My seemingly small act of mercy, in the end, extracted a terrible price from my people. I wonder—if I had it to do over again, would I?

”

Glenndy Sculley, whose “I am...” column on Exodus characters will appear in 1997 issues of *LWT*, is associate director of the ELCAs Department for Synodical Relations and a seminarian at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

She Took a Stand

Readers tell a modern-day story of a woman of faith and courage.

Simple Acts of Daily Living

With her quiet, unassuming manner, she would probably never see herself as a woman of faith and courage; yet Sharon has taught me much about the expression of those two gifts in daily life. She is a registered nurse in a 51-bed nursing-home unit for which I am an activity coordinator. Each day I see her efficiently dispensing medications, giving treatments, and completing the copious paperwork now required in health care. But her caregiving goes far beyond her nursing duties.

Reminiscent of Jesus' foot washing, she assumes a nursing assistant's task of taking a frantic resident to the bathroom. Patiently she explains to another resident that, even though Alzheimer's disease has taken her memory of recent events, she remains a smart lady because she still can play the piano and remembers what happened long ago. Supportive of her co-workers, she works a nine-day stretch without complaint so a nurse manager can take a much needed vacation.

While grieving the death of a favorite aunt and "second mom," I, too, became a recipient of Sharon's gentle care. She had no grandiose words of sympathy—just a hug, a tissue, a hand squeeze. Then she calmed the storm with diversion, speaking of kids and sports, plays and concerts, and church cookbooks until I was ready to return to my work.

Thank you, Sharon, for showing me that the qualities of faith and courage sometimes can be seen best in simple acts of daily living and caring.

Nancy Brenny
Edina, Minnesota

(continued on next page)

Helping People Participate

Mary J. Smith is changing a lot of attitudes about physically challenged people. When Mary's congregation did not believe that handicapped people could be worship leaders, she volunteered to be a lector, reading from the Scriptures in braille. Since then, she has served on church council as chair of worship and music, Christian education, and evangelism committees, and as congregational unit president of Women of the ELCA.

Mary, totally blind since her teens, earned a bachelor of arts degree in psychology from Albright College in Reading, Pennsylvania. She worked for the Berks County Association for the Blind as a rehabilitation specialist.

Since 1989, Mary has been chair of the Festival of Faith, an annual ecumenical celebration. Physically challenged people take an active role in this festival, demonstrating to pastors and church members that they are ready and able to take part when given opportunity.

The May-June 1993 edition of "Mosaic" [ELCA's video magazine] featured Mary at a local church that has four areas of accessibility—ramp and elevator, large-print worship aids, sound assistance, and special greeters. The segment begins with Mary stating that her blindness has actually strengthened her faith, because "I need God in every aspect of my life." Her concluding remark is that she hopes the ELCA, through all its members, will become completely inclusive, a welcoming and accepting church.

*Thelma F. Gaylord
Temple, Pennsylvania*

Anything but Typical

We were a typical group of "twenty-something girls" planning a summer vacation after our first year of teaching. That is how I met Stephanie, a friend of a friend, who turned out to be anything but typical! In the 25 years I've known her, I've seen her grow into a remarkable woman of faith and courage. Back in the summer of '72, our five weeks of tenting together allowed us to share our many hopes and dreams.

In the next two years as her teaching went by the wayside, we often wondered, "What will become of Steph?" Whereas our lives had evolved into balancing marriage, children, and jobs, she appeared to be led by a different calling. She did admirable things: caring for the terminally ill, working with church groups, helping anyone in need—all very good work, but with little pay

r security. Over the next 15 years when we would meet for an annual lunch, we would often shake our heads and whisper, "Won't Steph ever settle down to a 'real' job?" We didn't realize that she was being prepared for a very *real* job for the Lord.

Today Stephanie has completed 55 pilgrimages to the war-torn former Yugoslavia, bringing people to the village of Medjugorje, a place of spiritual uplifting and an outreach for peace. For whatever reasons people go, they have found in Stephanie a competent organizer, brave leader, and lifelong friend. She has encouraged people to have faith, to trust in God, and never to hesitate to call her for help.

Steph could have bowed to peer pressure instead of listening to God's plan for her life. She could have let the politics and danger of traveling to a troubled land keep her home. She could have gotten worn out from caring for so many needy people. We used to tease her that someday her name would be Saint Stephanie. Now we respect and support her for her commitment. She ranks in our hearts as a true "woman of faith and courage."

*Connie Reinhard
Isanti, Minnesota*

Faithful to the End

Suffering most of the 49 years of her life with diabetes, Sharon, my dear friend, took a stand that was very courageous and selfless.

Diabetes had stripped Sharon of nearly all her eyesight. She was on kidney dialysis and she had lost one leg, one hand, and her fingers on her other hand to infections.

Because of our friendship, Sharon knew she could talk to me openly about her concerns, and one day when I visited her in the nursing home she wanted to talk. I just sat and listened.

Sharon told me that she knew her diabetes was slowly killing her. She talked openly about how her struggle was not only hers, but it was also hurting her mother, sisters, and daughter. She knew a decision needed to be made about her further treatment.

Sharon was too young to be faced with the reality of her own death, but she shared with me that she knew Jesus was real, and he knew his promises were real. Sharon was ready to go home to be with Jesus. We both cried at the hopeful thought of her body being completely whole for the first time. We prayed together and thanked God for the promise of eternal life.

Later that week Sharon took her stand. Sharon decided that he would not take any more dialysis or amputation. She wanted to leave her sick body behind and go on to her reward. She was firm with her family and doctors, and the decision was made.

Sharon's next week was spent with her family, slowly dying in the nursing home. But there was always that faint smile of hope for better things "on the other side."

Sharon died at the age of only 49, but she was courageous and faithful to the end. I know she is now at peace because of God's wonderful promises.

Nancy Johnston

Columbia City, Indiana

Dared to Take a Stand

This day I knew was to be different. The seminary students were on strike and would not be in class. What had triggered their displeasure is hard to remember now. Those were the years of student unrest—the late 1960s.

What I vividly remember is Justina. She was one of the 30 wives of the African Lutheran seminary students who came to class each morning for their own special study program. I felt honored to be the coordinator of this program and one of their teachers. But would the wives come to *their class*, even though their husbands had vowed to strike? Most African wives dutifully followed their husband's wishes.

Justina was often a bit late to class. She had three young children to get ready for child care and kindergarten. But this morning Justina was already sitting firmly in her seat when I arrived. A few others joined her. Later I asked her, "Justina, how did you decide to come to class this morning even though many did not?"

Justina told me about something that happened when she was in middle school. The students were angry at the teacher. This was a Christian school. Morning devotions, including the singing of a hymn, were led each day by the teacher. The students had agreed that the next morning when the teacher announced the hymn, they would all remain silent. Evidently, all but Justina, who kept her thoughts to herself. When the hymn was announced, Justina sang. Later she was upbraided by her classmates, "Why did you sing when we had agreed not to?" I have never forgotten Justina's answer. She replied, "When I sing a hymn, I do not sing for you, I do not sing for the teacher, I sing to God, to praise him."

Young Justina took a stand and learned that she could be different. She could dare to take a stand for God.

Lois F. Okerstrom

El Cerrito, California

Women, Water, and Salvation

Mary Albing

When [Moses' mother] could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. (Exodus 2:3)



At a groom's dinner recently, my friend Rita told a story about when her daughter Anne was married. Rita happily helped her daughter prepare and enjoyed the prenuptial showers and the rehearsal. On the day of the wedding, she joyfully watched her daughter walk up the aisle and then back with her new son-in-law. The reception was wonderful. Through it all she was dry-eyed.

Two days later as she passed Anne's bedroom, memories flooded her mind, and she began to cry and could not stop. She cried and cried the whole day. She said, "I cried a river." She knew she had not lost Anne, since she shares her with her husband and his family. But she no longer watches over her day by day. She depends on God even more than before to watch over and to care for her daughter.

I wonder if Moses' mother cried a river as she placed her tiny son, protected the best he could be, in a little ark among the reeds. As she let go of that basket and prayed that God keep him safe, did she know that God would form a conspiracy of women to deliver him from the water and certain death? Did she know Pharaoh's daughter would find Moses? Did she know her daughter would be quick-witted enough to offer her real mother as a nursemaid for Moses?

How could she possibly know the great adventure God had in store for her precious child? What a journey of faith he had before him! It was a mission to lead people out of bondage, to stand up fearlessly to evil and danger, to bring God's word to the Israelites and finally to all the nations. And it all began with a small step of faith, I am sure, in a river of tears with a woman giving up a child to God, from death to life, through water to deliverance.

Not long ago, I saw another river of tears. They flowed down the face of a mother as her little daughter was baptized. We listened to the words of the beautiful Flood Prayer “*...You led Israel by the pillar of cloud and fire through the sea, out of slavery into the freedom of the promised land. In the waters of the Jordan your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Spirit.... He made water a sign of the Kingdom...*” (Lutheran Book of Worship, p. 122). She will care for her daughter; but the child also belongs to God. God

has already given her the victory. Now there is in store for her a great faith adventure, as there was for Moses. That venture is nothing less than a mission to lead people out of bondage, to stand up fearlessly to evil and danger, and to bring God’s word to all the nations.

It is so because another mother gave her child over to God, from death to life, through water to deliverance. **G**

The Rev. Mary Albing is pastor at St. Peder Lutheran in Minneapolis.

Toward unity in Christ

The Gift of Full Communion: How Will It Be Received?

Darlis J. Swan

Last March I was invited by the Lutheran World Federation to study faith in the suburbs in the Church of Sweden. As an LWF member, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is in communion with the church of Sweden. Being in communion means having the opportunity to share the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper...not just as individuals but as communities of faith. Being in communion means participating in many aspects of the life of the other church.

During my stay in Sweden, I experienced the daily life of members of the Church of Sweden in Kungsangen, a parish

near Stockholm. My task was to interview the church members, which in the Church of Sweden includes most of the population in that particular suburb. I was to meet people in their homes, at worship, in restaurants, and in shopping centers. Thanks to my host, the Rev. Gert Olsson, the vicar, I was able to fill my days with rich experiences among people of all ages, who, although they did not talk much about their faith, shared their life journeys with me. While I was absorbing all this information, I was preparing a lecture to give to the church staff and others. My assignment was to offer challenges to the church in Kungsangen based on my experiences in the ELCA, a multicultural church.



From left: The Rev. Mona Lindberg, Dr. Darlis J. Swan, and the Rev. Gert Olsson in Kungsangen, Sweden.

I was invited to go on an excursion with the women of the parish. Once a year the women of Kungsangen meet with the women of the parish in Bro, a nearby suburb. On Sunday morning, I boarded the bus with the women to go to Balingsta Kyrka (an 11th-century church) to begin the day with worship. One of the women, Crico, was to be my host because she speaks English well. Unfortunately, Crico was ill, and although she went on the trip, it was difficult for her to talk. None of the other women speak English, and I do not speak Swedish! As we rode through dense fog across the frozen fields lined with frost-covered forests, I began to feel as if I were in the wrong place.

As I entered the church, I noted the magnificent crucifix, the altar, the pulpit, and other signs of our common Christian identity. Since it was the Lenten season, purple tulips adorned the altar. Crico, who was feeling better, read the gospel for the day to me. The order of worship was the same as ours. The hymn tunes were familiar. When the Gospel was read by the pastor, and the bread was broken and the wine was poured, I realized I had been given a gift. I was receiving the Word and Sacrament with sisters in Christ in Sweden with whom I

shared a common belief in Jesus Christ. We remembered our baptism, and although I could not talk about it with my sisters, we had all experienced the cleansing and purifying baptismal waters. I was reminded that unity in Christ transcends geographical and cultural boundaries.

The women brought me pictures of the church to take home so I would remember worshiping with them. We left the church, boarded the bus again, and traveled to a castle along a lake. At the castle we had coffee hour, and the women spoke to me through Crico. We talked about ordinary events of daily life, our relationships, homes, and families. The program for the day was a slide presentation of a recent LWF visit to Rwanda, and we were able to share our concern for the women and children of the world. Together, these sisters and I shared a journey to the cross of Christ and anticipated the resurrection.

As we returned home that evening, I knew we had all gained new insights into the nature of what it means for our churches to be in communion, although we never said those particular words. The symbols of worship and other rituals of the day helped our stories intersect and join with God's story. We had "waded in the same water" and had begun to recognize and receive gifts from each other.

I remembered that day when I returned to Kungsangen several weeks ago and walked through the church cemetery on a sunny, warm afternoon. I paused at a small waterfall and put my hands in the cool water. The Vicar Olsson said, "When you put your hand in the water, it is changed. The water keeps flowing, but it is not the same water." I sensed that by being with the women in that parish, I had put my hand in the water. I was changed, just as I suppose their women's group was different because of my visit.

The women's hospitality gave me a chance to be part of a gathering of women in another part of the communion of Lutherans worldwide. Through the gift of our common baptism, we were brought together to receive God's love in new ways. Receiving God's grace through Word and Sacrament is a precious gift that reminds us of how Christ prayed for God's people to be one.

The gift of full communion is being offered to the ELCA and several other churches in 1997. The ELCA has two proposals for full communion before it, one between the ELCA and the Episcopal Church in the USA, the other between the ELCA and three Reformed Churches: the Presbyterian Church in the USA, the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ. Both proposals are based on more than 30 years of

fficial dialogue. While the ELCA will vote on the two proposals separately, both involve entering into full communion for the sake of the visible unity of the church. Although dialogue will continue among the churches, the proposals state that the differences that remain need not be church dividing. The proposals claim that there is sufficient agreement on the Gospel between the ELCA and the Episcopal Church, and the ELCA and those three Reformed Churches to enter into full communion.

The definition of full communion in both proposals is based on the six characteristics from *Ecumenism: The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, a policy statement adopted by the Churchwide Assembly in 1991. They are as follows:

-) a common confessing of the Christian faith;
-) a mutual recognition of Baptism and a sharing of the Lord's supper, allowing for joint worship and an exchangability of members;
-) a mutual recognition of Baptism and an availability of ordained ministers to the service of all members of churches in full communion, subject only but always to the disciplinary regulations of the other churches;
-) a common commitment to evangelism, witness, and service;
-) a means of common decision-making on critical common issues of faith and life; and
-) a mutual lifting of any condemnations that exist between churches.

It will be up to these churches to decide whether this is a gift they can receive. While serious and appropriate questions are being raised about both proposals, the most common is, "What difference will it make?"

In the parish in the Church of Sweden, I was struck by the significance of the relationship of full communion for sharing the mission and witness of the church in the world. While we can do many things cooperatively with other Christians, sharing the heart of our faith and life in a formal relationship can help us cut through the barriers, both real and perceived, enabling us to communicate the Gospel in a fresh and more powerful way so the world may believe. **CAG**

Darlis J. Swan is the associate director of the Department for Ecumenical Affairs at the ELCA.

The Lutheran-Episcopal Proposal for full communion is found in *The Concordat of Agreement*. The Lutheran-Reformed Proposal is found in *A Common Calling and A Formula of Agreement*. Both proposals will be considered for adoption by the ELCA at its upcoming Assembly in Philadelphia in August 1997. If you have questions or would like to know how to obtain a copy of these documents, call the ELCA's Department for Ecumenical Affairs at 800-638-3522, ext. 2610.



A Vibrant History of Faith in Action

Sister Phyllis Enck

Lutheran deaconesses—part of U.S. history for 147 years—have been true pioneers in social service. Early deaconesses broke ground for those who serve in the diaconate today, as well as in nursing, social welfare, and parishes.

The need for consecrated, trained workers for hospitals and other institutions helped bring the diaconate to U.S. shores. Dr. William

Passavant is credited with bringing the first deaconesses to the United States. Dr. Passavant met Pastor Theodore Fliedner—called the founder of the modern diaconate—in Europe. Fliedner ran a hospital and training school for deaconesses in Germany.

In July 1849, Pastor Fliedner came to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania,

Photo above: Sisters from the Baltimore Motherhouse, circa 1895.

Diaconate: A group of deaconesses or deacons. The word diaconate comes from the Greek *diakonia*, which means "service." Diaconal ministry is one service, also known as a ministry of mercy.

ith four deaconesses. The very ext day they began their work in he Pittsburgh Infirmary, now assavant Hospital. Four days ter, representatives from a group F U.S. churches came together to edicate the first Protestant hospital in the country. Present was Louisa Marthens, a member of assavant's congregation, who ffered her services to the dea-nesses. One year later she was onsecrated as the first U.S. dea-ness. The story of her 50 years of service is a story of the establish-ment and management of hospitals nd orphans' homes ranging from hiladelphia to beyond Chicago.

Although nursing was the chief service of the Pittsburgh dea-nesses, they soon saw the need or a children's home for those rphaned by a yellow fever epidemic. When the number of orphans utgrew the home in Pittsburgh, the older boys were taken to Zelienople, Pennsylvania, where an Orphans Farm School had been stablished. Lutheran Youth and Family Services in Zelienople con-nues to minister today.

In 1859, Sister Louisa took our orphans to Philadelphia to stablish a home for them. This as the beginning of Silver prings-Martin Luther School, which still operates in Plymouth

Meeting, Pennsylvania. In all, some 45 benevolent institutions of the Lutheran church can be traced to Passavant and the ministry of these early U.S. dea-nesses.

In the first 35 years, few women responded to the call to become deaconesses. But

by 1883 there were signs of change. In Brooklyn, New York, Norwegian leaders saw the need for care of Norwegian immigrants. They sent a letter to Sister Elizabeth Fedde, a Norwegian deaconess, describing the need and challenge in the United States. She wasted little time and established hospitals and mother-houses in Brooklyn and Minneapolis. The ELCA yearly commemorates her life and work on February 25, the date of her death in 1921.

It was through persistent attempts of German Hospital in Philadelphia—now Lankenau Hospital—to im-prove its nursing care that the first deaconess mother-house in the United States was started in 1884. The hospital board asked John D. Lankenau, the hospital's president, to look into the ser-vices of deaconesses. He did, and soon seven deaconesses came from Germany in June 1884.

Over a period of 10 years, the group started by these deaconesses helped to open a home for the aged, a Lutheran school for girls, a chil-dren's hospital, and a Christian kindergarten.

Deaconesses pursued ever-new areas of service. A parish deaconess in Philadelphia, Sister Maria Roeck,

concerned with the effects of tuberculosis, opened the Kensington Dispensary for the Treatment of Tuberculosis in 1906. River Crest, a large farm near Philadelphia, served as a center for preventing tuberculosis. These facilities provided the beginnings for what today is Ken-Crest Centers.

ASwedish-American pastor in Omaha, Nebraska, saw the need for a Lutheran hospital. The Rev. E.A. Fogelstrom sent a member of his congregation, Bothilda Svenson, to Philadelphia to be trained as a deaconess. In 1891, the Augustana Lutheran Synod endorsed the program and Bothilda Svenson was consecrated as the first sister in the Immanuel Diaconate.

In 1895, the General Synod, the first intersynodical body formed by U.S. Lutherans, established a motherhouse for the deaconesses in Baltimore, Maryland, and a Board of Deaconess Work. Though trained chiefly to provide home nursing, the sisters soon opened an industrial school for children and an evening school for African-American children. Deaconesses also served in parishes and in overseas missions.

In 1910, the board opened the first specialized school to prepare women for full-time church work at the Baltimore Motherhouse. There more than 1,000 women church workers—in addition to deaconesses—received training in Christian education, parish work, and in health and welfare services. They served as professional leaders in educational and youth ministries, as

inner-city mission workers, church secretaries, pastors' wives, and missionaries.

By the 1940s, the diaconate was pushing for standards, recognition, and compensation guidelines for all full-time lay church workers.

Deaconesses knocked on the doors of the theological seminaries asking for admission, not only for themselves, but for all women wanting theological education for church service. Finally seminary doors began to open for deaconesses, eventually for lay workers, and later for those women seeking ordination.

Deaconesses pushed for a short-term program for church service. From this impetus, the program Associates in Deaconess Service was born and is still operating today as the Diaconal Year Program.

The Deaconess Community of the ELCA (formerly of the LCA) was established in 1966 when the deaconess motherhouses in the three cities of Philadelphia, Omaha, and Baltimore merged. Today, members of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA are heirs of the courage, faith, and devotion of the pioneering servants of the diaconate. **CAG**

Sister Phyllis Enck is a member of the ELCA Deaconess Community. She serves as director of education and interpretation of the Deaconess Community, as well as director of its Diaconal Year Program.

For information about the ELCA Deaconess Community and the Diaconal Year Program, write to The Deaconess Community, ELCA, 801 Merion Square Road, Gladwyne, PA 19035-1599; or call 610-642-8838.

Abundant, Flowing Water

Marj Leegard

No person appreciates water flowing from a faucet as much as someone who remembers water pails. Those white enameled pails were permanently orange on the inside from the iron in the water. Tin dippers gave the drink a flavor that cannot be duplicated. For deep and sincere appreciation of the miracle of running water, you need to have walked down the path to the little house in a cold rain. Water was good even when it had to be lugged in buckets, but it seems more miraculous when it appears in lavish quantities with so little effort.

Isaiah tells us that God's gifts, pictured as water, are more lavish than even the bounteous flow from modern plumbing. Isaiah 41:17 describes our need: We are "parched with thirst." It is difficult for adults to remember that, but not for our children. In the back seat of a car thirst sets in just past the 5-mile mark of a 10-mile drive. We grown-ups are seldom aware of being thirsty.

Yet our tongues are parched. We will die without the water God provides. And God does provide. Creator God makes rivers from nothing. Great plunging rivers, radiant with rainbows of color and spumes of

white water. Water enough. But God sends more. Wells in the valleys for those who cannot approach the roaring river. And for those without a bucket or a path to the well, there will be pools in the desert.

In the pools children play. Tired people bathe dusty, calloused feet. The sick are brought for healing and rest. Wherever a blessed sickroom is tucked into a caring corner, wherever the young color and paste and learn, wherever friends gather in quiet sanctuary around the Word, there are the pools of water.

With such a gift of life-giving water, can there be more? Yes! Greenness and growth around the pools of water: cedar, acacia, myrtle, olive, cypress, and pine trees. Green fragrant growth, shade and life, protection, and beauty. "How? When?" we ask.

Streams from arid heights, wells and pools have a life-giving, life-sustaining, love-from-God explanation. "The holy Lord God of Israel created it all" (Isaiah 41:20b Contemporary English Version).

Remember the water pails and count your blessings! Remember your baptism and give thanks! G

LWT columnist Marj Leegard is from Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.

Brief Prayers on News Items

Sonia C. Solomonson

Your daily prayer list

What news stories caught your attention in the past few days? You can do something about those people and concerns: add them to your prayer list. You might pray for:

- women and girls in countries where female circumcision is standard procedure.
- all who are affected by clergy sexual abuse.
- farmers who are trying to recover from severe losses due to drought, flooding, or other disasters.

Church in China and women's roles

The Lutheran World Federation commissioned a study on women's status in the church in China. One in six pastors is a woman, and 465 women are studying at 13 theological training centers to become church workers. But daily life still is fraught with prejudice, so the church developed a five-point plan to counter misogynistic (anti-women) tendencies.

Bless China's efforts, O Loving God, to provide justice for women.

African women theologians and publishing

About 100 African women theologians held their second gathering in Nairobi, Kenya. They spent time reviewing the theological writings of some participants, with the aim of helping women publish their works. Kenyan theologian Nyambura Njoroge told the All Africa Press Service, which reported on the conference, "There is a notable lack of written materials on theological issues from the point of view of an African woman theologian."

Thank you for the diversity of gifts and voices, O God.

Sonia C. Solomonson is a senior editor for The Lutheran.

Alliance against prostitution

Women of the ELCA in the Southwestern Minnesota and Northeastern Minnesota synodical women's organizations joined with the Alliance for Speaking Truths on Prostitution in "Campaign 10,000." This project delivered a prevention message to 10,000 Minnesota students last year. The women provide education and resources to create awareness in schools, churches, and communities. A-STOP seeks to reduce commercial sexual exploitation and is especially concerned with the high number of youth pulled into prostitution.

Light of the World, help us all to view one another as your loved creation, not to be exploited.

The *Ooohs* of Designated Gifts

In Vietnam, tribal farm families occupy marginal agricultural land in the hilly north-central regions where access to government assistance is difficult. Due to chronic poverty in these communities, they need help. You can help through a *Designated Gift to Program #555*. Your gift will aid families with healthcare for pregnant women and small children; increase the number and quality of nursery and preschool care; and expand income-producing opportunities, such as beekeeping, for farmers.

Ever thought about being a missionary to Senegal? You are, through your gifts! In Senegal, children account for more than 50 percent of all deaths. They need an adequate diet, good water, education, and effective medical care. An ELCA nurse is there establishing and supervising rural health sites, constructing latrines, vaccinating, and educating mothers' groups in healthcare. You are here with this nurse, not with shovels and syringes, but with hearts committed to mission because of your gift to *Designated Gift Program #570*.

Have you ever had a friend disappear from your life? That can be a very painful experience. Think, then, how painful it is for others not to know where their family members are. You can stand side by side with mothers from Guatemala who appeal to the United Nations for help in locating family members who have disappeared as a result of civil strife. How? Through your *Designated Gift to Program #512*, which supports the work of the Lutheran Office for World Community (LOWC). LOWC provides a meeting place for people whose voices are not being heard to



Leadership Development for Women #511 is a Women of the ELCA Designated Gift opportunity.

make presentations to diplomats, U.N. staff, and other organizations to encourage constructive policy changes within the U.N. system.

You've probably never met Kristian and Glen Flowers, yet you are helping them with adoption fees so a child will have a home. The baby's room is ready, Mom and Dad are sitting on pins and needles waiting for the call from the adoption agency, and love is bouncing off the walls and out the windows of their home. They are so excited! Through your gift to Program #528, you are bringing joy into the lives of many women, children, and families.

Ooohh! would be an appropriate response to what God is making happen through the Women of the ELCA Designated Gifts program. *Ooohh!* says it all. *Ooohh!* says, "Yes." "Praise God. "I love you." "We are family." "There is hope."

Ooohh! is the song of praise that bursts forth because the love of God cannot be contained, because it bursts forth through you!

If you would like to continue the *Ooohs!* of sharing the gospel in a variety of ways and places around the world, consider a gift to one of these Designated Gifts programs. Send your check to Women of the ELCA, 8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631-4189. Make out the check to Women of the ELCA Designated Gifts and indicate the program number on the memo line of the check.

Program name	Program #	Goal
• World Hunger	# 555	\$213,500
• Leadership Development for Women	# 511	\$100,000
• Missionary Support	# 570	\$100,000
• Policy Ministry—U.S. and U.N.	# 512	\$ 26,500
• Rural Ministries	# 517	\$ 31,000
• Urban Ministries	# 518	\$ 29,000
• Women and Children in Poverty	# 528	\$100,000

For more detailed information on the kinds of needs met and people served by these programs, request a copy of the "Freely Receive, Freely Give" Designated Gifts brochure (code LT68-9127) from Augsburg Fortress by calling 800-328-4648. You pay only the postage and handling fee. Consider ordering in quantity so more women in your congregation can share in the "*Ooohs*" of designated giving.

Bonnie Belasic
Director for Communication and
Stewardship Interpretation

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